

PRIVATE CALENDAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the unanimous-consent agreement, this is the day for the call of the Private Calendar.

The Clerk will call the first individual bill on the Private Calendar.

OSCAR SALAS-VELAZQUEZ

The Clerk called the bill (H.R. 1031) for the relief of Oscar Salas-Velazquez.

There being no objection, the Clerk read the bill, as follows:

H.R. 1031

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. WAIVER OF GROUNDS FOR DISAPPROVAL OF REQUESTS FOR CLASSIFICATION AND ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 204(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Attorney General may not disapprove a petition for classification of Oscar Salas-Velazquez under section 201(b)(2)(A)(i) of such Act, or an application for adjustment of the status of Oscar Salas-Velazquez under section 245 of such Act, on any ground relating to a determination that the marriage of Oscar Salas-Velazquez and Jennifer Christine Brady was entered into for the purpose of evading the immigration laws.

(b) WAIVER OF INADMISSIBILITY.—Notwithstanding subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of section 212(a)(6) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, Oscar Salas-Velazquez may not be considered to be within a class of excludable aliens at any time on or after the date of the enactment of this Act on any ground relating to—

(1) a determination that the marriage of Oscar Salas-Velazquez and Jennifer Christine Brady was entered into for the purpose of evading the immigration laws; or

(2) the deportation of Oscar Salas-Velazquez on February 9, 1995.

With the following committee amendment in the nature of a substitute:

Committee amendment in the nature of a substitute: Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. WAIVER OF GROUNDS FOR DISAPPROVAL OF REQUESTS FOR CLASSIFICATION AND ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 204(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Attorney General may not disapprove a petition for classification of Oscar Salas-Velazquez under section 201(b)(2)(A)(i) of such Act, or an application for adjustment of the status of Oscar Salas-Velazquez under section 245 of such Act, on any ground relating to a determination that the marriage of Oscar Salas-Velazquez and Jennifer Christine Brady was entered into for the purpose of evading the immigration laws.

(b) WAIVER OF INADMISSIBILITY.—Notwithstanding subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of section 212(a)(6) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, Oscar Salas-Velazquez may not be considered to be within a class of excludable aliens at any time on or after the date of the enactment of this Act on any ground relating to—

(1) a determination that the marriage of Oscar Salas-Velazquez and Jennifer Christine Brady was entered into for the purpose of evading the immigration laws; or

(2) the deportation of Oscar Salas-Velazquez on February 9, 1995.

(c) DENIAL OF PREFERENTIAL IMMIGRATION TREATMENT FOR CERTAIN RELATIVES.—The natural parents, brothers, and sisters of Oscar Salas-Velazquez shall not, by virtue of such relationship, be accorded any right, privilege, or status under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

(d) REDUCTION OF IMMIGRANT VISA NUMBER.—Upon the granting of an immigrant visa or permanent residence to Oscar Salas-Velazquez, the Secretary of State shall instruct the proper officer to reduce by 1, for the current or next following fiscal year, the worldwide level of family-sponsored immigrants under section 201(c)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

The Committee amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this legislation, H.R. 1031, is to reunite a family that has been ripped apart.

This bill is not about policy or politics. It is about bringing back a father for two adorable little boys, ages 3 and 6, who have missed their dad so much that they have cried every day for almost 2 years.

It is about bringing together a loving husband and wife who have been devastated for almost 2 years.

Mr. Speaker, this bill deals with the human side of government—the side that directly impacts families, mothers, fathers, and children.

Mr. Speaker, my staff and I have worked to help the Oscar and Sharron Velazquez family of Plymouth, MN, for more than 3 years.

For the past 2 years, we have worked to reunite Sharron Velazquez and her two young sons, Rico, 6, and Nicolas, 3, who have been separated from their husband and father, Oscar Velazquez. Oscar was deported in early 1995 and has been forced to live far away from his family in Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, this is truly a case of undue hardship that justifies the return of Oscar Velazquez.

Because Sharron Velazquez has a special medical condition that predisposes her to Reiter's Syndrome, a crippling disease with no cure, doctors have forbidden her from joining or even visiting her husband in Mexico.

According to medical experts who have examined Sharron Velazquez extensively, she has the antigen for Reiter's Syndrome, which would be triggered by organisms in the food and water in Mexico.

The unique circumstances facing this family certainly merit passage of this bill. This has been a long and tortuous struggle for the Velazquez family and their extended family, Jim and Julie Libby, Karen and Ron LePage, Ted and Therese Salonek, Rich and Becky Farniok and Patricia Morrison, and their many wonderful friends who have never lost faith that justice and fairness would prevail.

Mr. Speaker, I want to express my gratitude, on behalf of the Velazquez and Libby families, to several people whose assistance was crucial in moving this bill.

Our colleagues from the Judiciary Committee, especially Chairman HYDE, Chairman

LAMAR SMITH and Mr. SENSENBRENNER, were key in moving this bill through the Immigration and Claims Subcommittee and the full Judiciary Committee. On the other side, ranking member BRYANT was also very supportive.

Also, special thanks to Cindy Blackston of the Immigration and Claims Subcommittee and Karin Hope of my staff, who worked so hard on this bill and whose expertise and counsel have been invaluable.

Finally, I am grateful to Senator HATCH and his staff, who have also been very helpful.

Mr. Speaker, a loving family awaits Oscar Velazquez, his employer eagerly awaits his return, and the members of this church, who have been holding nightly vigils, are praying for Oscar's return.

Let us put politics totally aside here and do the right thing for the Velazquez family.

Let us right a wrong. Let us reunite the Velazquez family by passing H.R. 1031.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NGUYEN QUY AN AND NGUYEN NGOC KIM QUY

The Clerk called the bill (H.R. 1087) for the relief of Nguyen Quy An and Nguyen Ngoc Kim Quy.

There being no objection, the Clerk read the bill as follows:

H.R. 1087

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS FOR NGUYEN QUY AN AND NGUYEN NGOC KIM QUY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (b) of section 201 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, Nguyen Quy An and Nguyen Ngoc Kim Quy shall each be eligible for issuance of an immigrant visa or for adjustment of status to that of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence upon filing an application for issuance of an immigrant visa under section 204 of such Act or for adjustment of status to lawful permanent resident.

(b) ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS.—If Nguyen Quy An or Nguyen Ngoc Kim Quy enters the United States before the filing deadline specified in subsection (c), he or she shall be considered to have entered and remained lawfully and shall, if otherwise eligible, be eligible for adjustment of status under section 245 of the Immigration and Nationality Act as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION AND PAYMENT OF FEES.—Subsections (a) and (b) shall apply only if the application for issuance of an immigrant visa or the application for adjustment of status is filed with appropriate fees within 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) REDUCTION OF IMMIGRANT VISA NUMBER.—Upon the granting of an immigrant visa or permanent residence to Nguyen Quy An and Nguyen Ngoc Kim Quy, the Secretary of State shall instruct the proper officer to reduce by 2, during the current or next following fiscal year, the total number of immigrant visas that are made available to natives of the country of the aliens' birth under section 203(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act or, if applicable, the total number of immigrant visas that are made available to natives of the country of the aliens' birth under section 202(e) of such Act.

With the following committee amendment in the nature of a substitute:

Committee amendment in the nature of a substitute: Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. WAIVER OF CERTAIN NATURALIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NGUYEN QUY AN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the inability of Nguyen Quy An to meet the requirements of section 316 of the Immigration and Nationality Act that relate to having the status of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence, and residence and physical presence in the United States, if otherwise qualified he shall be considered eligible for naturalization and, upon filing an application for naturalization and being administered the oath of renunciation and allegiance pursuant to section 337 of such Act, shall be naturalized as a citizen of the United States.

(b) DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION AND PAYMENT OF FEE.—Subsection (a) shall apply only if the application for naturalization is filed with appropriate fees within 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress we are often called upon to enact sweeping legislation that will have a substantial impact on millions of people. However, I think most of us realize that many times we can take smaller, more limited actions that will have an enormous effect on the lives of only a few. Often, it is these actions that are most fulfilling and most meaningful.

Today, I am hopeful that the House will pass legislation that exemplifies such an endeavor, and which also honors a man whose bravery saved the lives of American servicemen, and cost him dearly in his service to our country. This bill, H.R. 1087, will secure the immigration status of Major Nguyen Quy An by allowing him to apply for U.S. citizenship without waiting an additional 5 years. However, in actuality I believe it is we who would be honored by the naturalization of this courageous man.

Major An is a genuine hero who, as a pilot in South Vietnam's elite "King Bee" helicopter group, flew numerous combat missions in support of U.S. troops during the Vietnam war. In one particularly notable act of heroism, he risked his own life in order to save the lives of four American servicemen. On January 17, 1969, he led a combined American-South Vietnamese flight to insert American Special Forces troops deep into an enemy-held, sniper-infested jungle along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. After one of the U.S. Army helicopters in the flight was hit by enemy fire, Major An maneuvered his ship to a position next to his American comrades and led them to a clearing in the jungle. With complete disregard for his own safety, and under incessant, intense enemy fire, he landed his helicopter next to the crippled American ship and waited for the four crew members to make their way to him.

Major An was cited for the Silver Star and the U.S. Government awarded him the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism in combat

for his courage in this incident. He later lost his arms when he was severely burned after his helicopter was downed in a similar U.S. combat rescue mission.

Our Government, recognizing the heroism and service that he has given to the United States, granted Major An "humanitarian parole" so that he and his daughter could come to the United States in 1994. They were granted a 1-year extension of their humanitarian visas last December, but H.R. 1087 would allow Major An to quickly become an American citizen, and to promptly file for his daughter to become a permanent U.S. resident. A similar bill has been introduced in the Senate by Senator BENNETT JOHNSTON and has been cosponsored by former Senator Dole, as well as Senators BENNETT, HATFIELD, NICKLES, SHELBY, SPECTER, BROWN, and INOUE. It is my understanding that the Senate is prepared to pass our bill quickly once we send it to them.

Without passage of this bill, Major An will not be able to resolve his immigration status and could ultimately be forced to return to Vietnam where he would face an uncertain future. Even if he is allowed to remain here, the uncertainty of his status prevents him from obtaining employment, and creates terrible concern and anguish for him and his daughter.

Private bills are certainly an extreme measure, and should be given close scrutiny. However, in this case, I believe a private bill is clearly warranted. The Immigration and Naturalization Service has found that, other than enactment of this bill, Major An and his daughter have no other options. The House Judiciary Committee unanimously approved this measure by voice vote.

This country owes Major An a debt of gratitude. He is a decorated war veteran who risked his own life to save the lives of four American servicemen, and lost his arms during a U.S. combat mission. The least that our country can do to honor his service to America is to secure his place here in America, and to help him to quickly become a citizen of his adopted country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed.

The title was amended so as to read: "A bill for the relief of Nguyen Quy An."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GAIL E. DOBERT

The Clerk called the bill (H.R. 4025) for the relief of the estate of Gail E. Dobert.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be passed over without prejudice.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

COMMENDING OPERATION SAIL

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the Senate joint resolution (S.J. Res. 64) to commend Oper-

ation Sail for its advancement of brotherhood among nations, its continuing commemoration of the history of the United States, and its nurturing of young cadets through training in seamanship, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

Ms. DELAURO. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] for an explanation of the legislation.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, this resolution commends Operation Sail for its advancement of international cooperation among nations, for its continuing commemoration of the history of the United States and its contribution to the training of young cadets in the skills of seamanship.

The bill encourages all Americans and citizens of the world to join in the celebration of the 224th birthday of the United States.

Equally important, it encourages continued American participation in the international tall ship community and in tall ship events across the United States and the world.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my Republican colleague's request to pass Senate Joint Resolution 64 by unanimous consent request. Senate Joint Resolution 64 is a bipartisan resolution honoring the Operation Sail Organization and OpSail 2000, an international gathering of tall ships that will take place in New York Harbor to celebrate the 224th birthday of the United States and to welcome the new millennium.

This glorious event follows the tradition of the previous OpSail events: OpSail '76 which celebrated the bicentennial of the Nation; OpSail '86 which celebrated the centennial of the Statue of Liberty; and, OpSail '92 which celebrated the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of North America. Operation Sail has worked in cooperation with every President of the United States since John F. Kennedy, and all OpSail events have been endorsed by the President of the United States at that time.

OpSail 2000 is expected to be the largest gathering of tall ships in history, and it will foster international good will and the advancement of brotherhood among nations. In addition, OpSail 2000 will showcase the beautiful Connecticut coast of the Long Island Sound for all the world to see. We look forward to this exciting even of which all Americans can be proud.

Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. SHAYS].

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, just to add my voice to this resolution, it is truly bipartisan, Mr. DODD and Mr. D'AMATO in the Senate and others, and just to say that this is an exciting opportunity for this country.